



United Church of Christ

# The Church Messenger

February 2026

Pastor Karen  
Griswold



## Encouraging Word

### Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.



## Serving for February

### Nursery

1 Judy Legge  
8  
15  
22 Michelle & Makayla Moffitt



### Sound

1 Ray Etgen  
8 Elisa Lash  
15 Ed Armentrout  
22 Dennis McIntosh

### Greeting & Announcements

Rob Painter

### Screens

Ed Armentrout / Kaylee Powell  
Tim Wilcox / Brandy Powell

### Videotaping

Jim Hoffman / Bec Smith

Please notice that we still need volunteers to for several dates

### Young People's Moment

1 Scott Griswold  
8  
15  
22

### Junior Church

1 Scott Griswold  
8 Julie & Olivia Wilcox  
15  
22



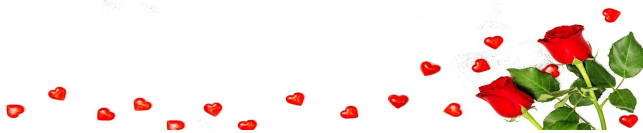
**We all serve with our presence in worship. Please join us this Sunday.**



Feb 1	8:30 am	Deacons Meeting Sacrament of Holy Communion Finance Team Meeting
	2:30 - 5:00 pm	Scout Meetings
Feb 3	9:30 am	Tuesday Mornings
	6:00 pm	Church Board Meeting
Feb 4	6:00 pm	Consider This - discussion
Feb 5	10:00 am	Missionary Aide
Feb 8		Scout Sunday - lunch provided <b>Youth Bake Sale</b>
Feb 9	6:00 pm	Pastoral Relations Team meeting
Feb 10	9:30 am	Tuesday Mornings
Feb 11	6:00 pm	Consider This - discussion
Feb 15		Education Team Meeting 2:30-5:00 pm Scout Meetings
Feb 17	9:30 am	Tuesday Mornings
Feb 18	6:00 pm	Consider This - discussion
Feb 19		Newsletter deadline
Feb 22		Worship & Property Team Meetings after Church
Feb 24	9:30 am	Tuesday Mornings
Feb 25	6:00 pm	Consider This - discussion



Feb 2 Andy Stidham  
Feb 7 Jim Hoffman  
Feb 8 Nancy Hamilton  
Feb 10 Irene Crouch  
Feb 13 Yvonne Humphrey  
Feb 14 Carol Hemphill  
Feb 17 Natalie Burden  
Feb 17 Delilah Moffitt  
Feb 19 Mke Loudon  
Feb 19 Lydia Henry  
Feb 21 Connie Kaelin  
Feb 22 Rick Hemphill  
Feb 22 Nevora Siegenthaler  
Feb 24 Lyla Powell  
Feb 26 Michelle Sullivan  
Feb 28 Rainie Zhang



14 Morgan & Michelle Sullivan  
15 Bill & Jill Klinger  
23 Wayne & Nancy Hamilton



Thank you for purchasing Christmas gifts for a WL-S family again this year. I continue to be amazed by your generosity and thoughtfulness. Because of you, this will be a special Christmas for those three little girls. The Family would also like to extend their “thanks” as well. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season!

Thanks again,  
Ms. Abbie Henry  
Elementary School Counselor



***Be so busy loving your life that you have no time for hate, regret or fear.***

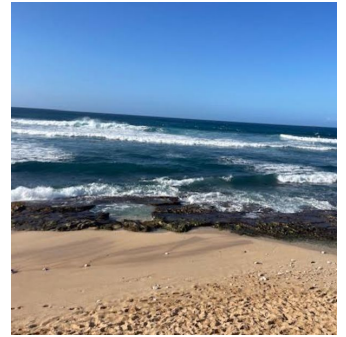
**Karen Salmansohn**



## For the Journey . . . . a note from Pastor Karen

### ***For the Journey...***

February 2026



The new year is upon us. As we look back at 2025, we see a year that has ebbed and flowed with a wide range of events. Events that brought us together in times of joy and laughter, in times of worship and praise, and in times of grief and sorrow. The constant is the love of God made known through God's people.

The love of God is visible in every act of care, listening, encouragement, and support. This church is good at this. I have found this church to be generous and gracious, and so, I would like to start 2026 off by saying thank you.

Thank you for the time spent in meetings, worship, planning events, being a listening ear, and having broad shoulders when needed. This is what a community of faith looks like.

Thank you for challenging me in ministry, and for not leaving me to do it alone.

I appreciate every conversation that has stretched me, and those that have shaped my vision of what ministry looks like here at West Liberty UCC.

It is a great honor to walk this journey of life together side by side.

My go to verse for this year is Proverbs 19:8

“The one who gets wisdom loves life;  
the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper.”

I really want to “get” wisdom---how about you? When Solomon asked for wisdom, he knew he could not do everything on his own.

Let us ask God for the wisdom we need to move about into this fractured world. Let us reach for the kind of wisdom that nurtures compassion, walks the way of justice, and expresses the radical, hospitable, love of God.

Journey well Beloved, journey well,

Pastor Karen







Dear UCC Family,

Thank you for allowing the Logan County Girl Scouts to use the church for our annual cookie rally. We were able to host 29 girls and they learned how to sell cookies, how to set goals for themselves and learned about this year's cookie sales mascot - "the black footed ferret". Which may have made a short appearance in person!!

Thank you!

Logan County Girl Scout Troops



Dear Pastor Karen,

Thank you for your confirmation class, members of the congregation, and yourself for helping us at the funeral home with our lumenaris. They looked beautiful this year and we love honoring our families in this way. You all are welcome to come back next year to help!

Your friends at Jennings, Farley & Seeley

Dear Pastor Karen &  
Church Family,



I want to send this message of gratitude for the prayers, cards, calls and delicious meals during my recent knee replacement surgery.

I appreciate each and every one of you and I thank God for such a loving Church family.

Nancy Grumman

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

FROM

*Team Patty*

Thank you for supporting the fundraiser for Patty Kauffman. Your generosity has made a meaningful difference during a time of deep sorrow for her family. Because of your kindness, we were able to raise over \$14,000, helping cover funeral costs and ongoing medical expenses.

We are truly blessed to be part of such a compassionate and giving community. Patty's life was taken far too soon, but the impact she made, and the love she inspired, will continue to live on.

With Sincere Gratitude,

*Team Patty*



Thanks to everyone who helped in any way with the Community Christmas Meal. We served 860 meals to our Community. Many hands make a difference!!

Thank you!!



"Love doesn't make the world go 'round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile." ~ Franklin P Jones

*Thank you*

Thank you for your gift to our Holiday Wreath project and Adult Day Services. We hope you have a blessed Holiday season,

Nicole Daniels  
Otterbein Green Hills

## Living Well Through Lent Devotional

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18th. Once again we offer to everyone the devotional study from Living Compass titled "Cultivating Healing and Wholeness in Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind."

Lent is an appropriate time for personal and corporate reflection on redemption, restoration and renewal prior to Easter Sunday. Copies are available in the Narthex and will also be used in the Alpha Class on Sunday mornings beginning February 15th. Please be sure to get your copy.



Our online Church Directory is a great tool to keep in touch with your church family. For it to be helpful we have to keep it current. If any of your family information has changed, please let Kathy Etgen know. Also, we need more pictures. Submit photos to Jim Hoffman or contact him to have pictures taken. If you need help downloading the software, contact Kathy Etgen.

### Ongoing Prayer List

If you have any updates to the prayer list, contact  
Kathy Etgen 937-597-8260 or office@wlucc.org.

#### Those Dealing with Ongoing Illness or Difficulties

Klara Pedersen	Rick Fullerton	Jamie Thomas
Chuck Buck	Vicki Lingrell	Trudy Bradley
Dennis Plank	Don Moffitt	Renay Fullerton
Carol Edgecomb	Christina Porter	Marcus Taylor
Lakyn Parrish	Joy Plank	Tony Grant
Andy Smith (Trimble's grandson)		

#### Our Service Men & Women

Cody Flora	Skyler Heilman	Zech Wilcox
Michael Ropp*	Corey Hartzler	Tracy Harr
Nick Burden	Samantha Ropp*	Darren McIntosh
James Powell		

\* Denotes Reserves

## Missionary Aide Valentine Bags



In February the Missionary Aide will be filling Valentine Bags for our college students and those in the military. Donations are much appreciated. Items generally include; of individually wrapped candies, treats, pop tarts, easy mac, microwave popcorn, ramen noodles, or small personal items. Items are needed by February 1st.

Thank you in advance for your help in filling these Valentine bags.

## A Word from Missionary Aide



The Good Earth is the program theme for Thursday, February 5th when we welcome guest speaker, Lynden Roof from Farm Service Agency. All are welcome to join us at 10:00am for an informative discussion on soil conservation.

This year our meetings include readings from the devotional book IN THE GARDEN paired with program speakers to help educate and inspire us to be good stewards of the creation.

Following the meeting and potluck lunch, Valentine bags will be filled for college students and for those serving in the military.



"There is nothing more truly artistic than to love people."  
Vincent van Gogh



## *Missionary Aide News*



### Missionary Aide Minutes – December 4, 2025

President Betty welcomed 8 ladies

Devotions- Pastor Karen read from the book, "In The Garden" and shared information on Frankincense and Myrrh.

-Betty read a brief history of the French carol, "The Holly and The Ivy"

Minutes of the last meeting, approved as printed in the Dec. church newsletter.

Treasurer, Judy

- Thank offering meal donations of \$140.
- Thank offering church envelopes, total unavailable at this time
- Current balance \$1116.00
- Vicki moved and second by Betty to donate \$300 toward the community Christmas meal.
- Vicki moved and seconded by Sandra to reimburse Mary \$100 for prayer quilt supplies.

Sock and Mitten Tree, Sandra

- Dec. 21 last day to donate items for Logan Co. Children/Family Services and Lutheran Community Services.

### Announcements

- Longest Night Service will be at 7 pm on Wednesday, Dec. 17 this year.
- Sunday Dec. 21, a liturgy from All Saints Sunday along with special reflection bulbs will honor church members who passed away in 2025.

No regular meeting in January. The February project is Valentine bags.

Missionary Aide will continue to collect personal care items for Jamaica and for local homeless shelters. Volunteers are needed at warming shelter in Bellefontaine.

The surprise shower for Michele Moffitt was a fun filled & well attended success.

The group shared joys and concerns. Pastor Karen led us in prayer.

Following adjournment with the Aide Benediction, the ladies were joined by Scot Griswold for a delightful potluck luncheon, singing of Christmas Carols and some humorous picture taking around the tree.

Carol Hemphill for Jane Moffitt, Secretary



## Junior Church - Scott Griswold



For the month of January, Junior Church's Unit is titled "Under Construction" with a faith focus - "God's Community Grows and Changes." The children are exploring ways that we practice and celebrate at West Liberty UCC, how we live and grow when God's people are living in community with one another, that God's community extends beyond our walls here at church, and there are always places set aside to worship God, even at home.

### POTLUCK

For the month of February, Junior Church's Unit is titled "Potluck" with a faith focus - "God Community Includes Everyone." The children will be exploring ways that we practice and celebrate our faith in our community. They will learn about the ways Jesus teaches to include everyone. This includes people who might normally be left out of society, who might be looked down upon, or who made unwise choices. The stories are centered around the ways Jesus taught, profound ways to love.



## Church DEACONS

Lucille Burden	luburden@yahoo.com
Kathy Etgen	8ketgens@gmail.com
Phil Etgen	etgen645@hotmail.com
Lauren Flora	luflo1983@gmail.com
Penny Higgins	aphiggins89@gmail.com
Julie McIntosh	mcintoshja2010@hotmail.com
Rob Painter	rdpainter@centurylink.net
Darry Plank	planda31@yahoo.com
Andy Smith	ajsmith3768@yahoo.com
Julie Wilcox	zechy65@gmail.com
Tim Wilcox	zechy65@gmail.com
Bill Warner	wswarner60@gmail.com



The Small Group is going to see Kayla Tracey in "Little Mermaid" at the Holland Theater in Bellefontaine on February 7th at 7:00 pm if interested contact Andy or Bec Smith.

Consider This .....

Consider this meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm for discussion and fellowship.

..... Consider Joining Us!

*"Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."  
Ella Fitzgerald*



**Autumn Swartz**



**Unity (grades 3rd and younger)**

On December 7th, 2025 the Unity youth group met to celebrate at a Birthday party for Jesus. The party included a craft, yummy lunch, a story from Pastor Karen games and birthday cake!

On March 22nd, after church the Unity Youth Group will meet to celebrate the Lenten season. Time together will include an interactive, educational story time, creative craft, and fun food. Please plan to bring your child and stay to enjoy a short Easter film titled "The Centurion" and delicious refreshments made by the education team.



**In Unison (grades 4-7)**

On March 15th at 5pm the In Unison youth group will meet. Plans are underway for this group to meet quarterly; meetings will include events at the church and time outside the church walls focusing on outreach, education and fun. Please reach out to the Education Team if you would like to help plan or be a part of these adventures. Reminders will be sent out via text and email. United in Christ



**United in Christ (8-12 grades)**

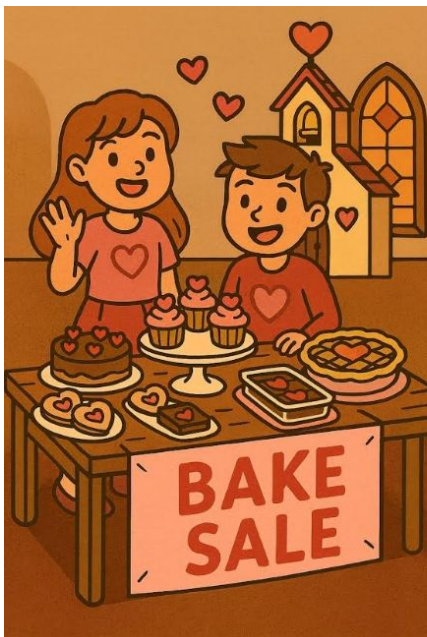
The United in Christ Youth Group met on January 11, 2026 at 5pm. Two youth and two adults attended the meeting. Rob Painter led us in devotions focusing on community and connection. We discussed plans for a possible mission trip to Tennessee. Pizza and Ping Pong rounded out the evening. Next meeting will be announced via email and text.

**Youth Bake Sale**

**February 8  
10 AM**

**Proceeds to  
benefit WLUCC  
Youth**

**Donations of  
baked goods are  
appreciated!**



**Youth Bake Sale**

The youth Bake Sale will be held on Sunday, February 8th in the overflow room prior to the service. All are welcome to participate by bringing food to be sold or by purchasing the baked goods. Proceeds of the sale are used for youth events throughout the year.



## Birthday Party for Jesus



***Live in the Moment!!***

## **West Liberty UCC – Congregational Meeting – January 11, 2026**

Approximately 42 people stayed after Church for the Congregational Meeting. Moderator, Penny Higgins opened the meeting thanking past Moderator, Tim Wilcox for his years of service and all those that have served on teams and committees. Pastor Karen offered prayer.

### **OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES**

- A motion was made by Tim Wilcox to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the October meeting and approve as printed in the newsletter, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Phil Etgen, motion carried.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT – Brandy Powell**

- Penny reviewed the financial reports
  - Missions - \$23,142 for 2025 above and beyond operating funds
  - Offering totals are behind budget for the year by \$20,668 – however, we spent \$34,438 on items outside of the planned budget.
  - Certificate of Deposit balances are: United Midwest Savings Bank \$252,369 – Huntington \$237,823 and United Church Funds is \$66,425.
- Mary Headley made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gaye Earick, motion carried.

### **FINANCE TEAM – Brandy Powell**

- We are still looking for someone to fill the Financial Secretary position.
  - Also, based on a recommendation by our accounting firm, we are looking for someone else to help count the weekly offering. Thanks to all that have been helping out in the meantime.
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### **DEACONS – Kathy Etgen**

- Met last week, Deacons shared prayer concerns and shepherding updates
- Reviewed the calendar for 2026
- We have distributed roughly \$6,800 from the Benevolence and Higgins Outreach funds during 2025.
- The Confirmands will be finishing up their classes in February, discussed some options for honoring them.
- Lenten Season preparations beginning
- Membership sub-committee shared a brochure that may be used in conjunction with a membership class.

### **EDUCATION TEAM – Rob Painter**

- Thank you to Brandy Powell for her work as Youth Director, still hoping to fill the position. In the meantime, the team is working to cover, Nursery, Jr. Church and Young People's moment, sign-up sheets in the back.
- Figuring out how to handle Youth Activities
- Christy Cook will assist with fundraising and will organize February 8<sup>th</sup> Youth Bake Sale.

### **HOSPITALITY TEAM – Thresa Hickman**

- Nothing planned until Confirmation concludes and Easter

### **MEMORIAL TEAM – Mary Headley – no report**

### **MISSIONARY AIDE – Betty Crowe**

- Our on-going projects are noted in the Mission Corner
- Upcoming meetings – February, Darin Leach Soil Conservation – March, Kim Collum Lutheran Community Service – April Sotera House

### **NOMINATING TEAM – Julie Wilcox**

- All teams are full but still looking for Financial Secretary and Youth Leader
- Please let someone on the team know if you are interested in serving in some capacity

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS TEAM – Bec Smith**

- The team will meet tomorrow. Please let one of them know if you have any questions or concerns.

### **PROPERTY TEAM – Ed Armentrout**

- Reliant Mechanical has been contacted to complete some maintenance work on both the Church and Parsonage furnaces. The Board approved \$1521 to cover the cost of maintenance
- Thanks to Pete Crowe he will use his electrician skills to help us replace lighting in the parsonage kitchen. New LED lighting will be installed
- If you are aware of anything that needs attention, please let the Property Team know.



**WORSHIP TEAM - No report**

- Team has not yet met

**YOUTH – Taylor Cook – no report**

**FOOD PANTRY – Carol Hemphill**

- No report – we cover the months of April & October

**GREENHILL REPRESENTATIVE – no report**

**PASTORAL REPORT – Karen Griswold**

- As we welcome 2026 thank you to all that have served the Church in any capacity, the love of God is visible in every act.
- Confirmation classes will conclude in February. Thank you for supporting them
- Continuing to work with Church Teams monthly
- Greetings from Mimi Chamberlain, our association minister and Ruth Hopkins our Regional Minister (Region 5 – Crossroads). Group is working on possible combined Lenten services. More to come.
- Continue to make visits, being cautious of germs
- Co-facilitating an Alzheimer's Dementia Support Group at Green Hills for care givers - meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.
- Will be welcoming a new Grandbaby in July!
- From Nelson Mandela "We must use time wisely and forever realize that time is always ripe to do it right."

OLD BUSINESS – nothing to discuss

NEW BUSINESS - nothing to discuss

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Tim Wilcox, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John Edwards, motion carried.

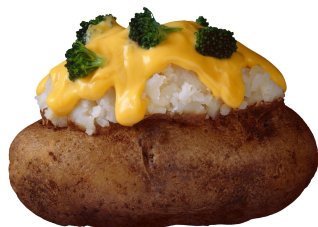
Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Etgen, Clerk



**SCOUT NEWS**



Sunday, February 8th is Scout Sunday at the Church. The Scouts will be assisting with the Church service and will be hosting a Baked Potato Bar Lunch as a thank you to the Church for their continued support. We hope you plan to attend!



*"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides." David Viscott*